

A PATHETIC
LOVE EPISODE
IN
A POET'S LIFE.

BEING LETTERS TO
ARTHUR W. E. O'SHAUGHNESSY.

Also a letter from him containing
A DISSERTATION ON LOVE.

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*Of this collection of letters twenty-five copies
have been privately printed by Clement
Shorter for distribution among his friends.*

*No 11
Clement Shorter*

INTRODUCTION.

ONE who was an assistant librarian at the British Museum in the seventies of last century recalls that among his official colleagues was an exceedingly handsome and poetically looking young man by name Arthur O'Shaughnessy. For him now and again, when the office hours had ended, there called a veiled lady in a well-appointed carriage with liveried servants. This veiled lady was always believed at the time to be O'Shaughnessy's mother. Certainly there was no doubt whatever in the minds of his fellow clerks at the Museum that Edward Bulwer Lytton, the novelist, was his father. The name "O'Shaughnessy" the poet owed to the old Irishwoman who brought him up. His mother may have been an Irishwoman, but her nationality has never been revealed. The first Lord Lytton's reputation was of a kind that made the fact of O'Shaughnessy's parentage easy of belief. His wife, the notorious Rosina, relates that on one occasion Lytton wrote to her from London: "I am here with Solitude and Silence enfolding me thinking of you." She came up in haste and piquantly relates that she found him with Solitude and Silence, but they were clothed in white muslin and were sitting on his knees. Dr. Garnett, who knew the facts, very properly evaded them in his article in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, where he refers to O'Shaughnessy's career as his colleague at the British Museum as follows:—

In June 1861 he was appointed a junior assistant in the library of the British Museum, and in August 1863 was promoted to an assistantship in the Zoological Department. This transfer gave great offence to naturalists, and was condemned by a resolution passed at a meeting of the Zoological Society. O'Shaughnessy's acquaintance with natural history must indeed have been exceedingly limited at the time; but, by devoting himself with perseverance to the single branch of herpetology, he came to be so good an authority upon this department of zoology as to be entrusted with the preparation of the portion of the annual zoological record devoted to it, and his death was deplored as a loss to science by Dr. Gunther, the head of the museum department to which O'Shaughnessy belonged.

In his *Memoir of Henry Walter Bates** Mr. Edward Clodd refers to his application for the post in the department of

* "The Naturalist on the River Amazon," by Henry Walter Bates. With a Memoir of the Author by Edward Clodd. John Murray. 1892.

INTRODUCTION.

Zoology in the British Museum that was given to O'Shaughnessy. "With that aptitude," says Mr. Clodd, "for putting round pegs into square holes which distinguishes even representatives of culture, the Trustees nominated a young man who had written some creditable poetry!" So far the world has accepted Mr. Clodd's estimate and has seemed inclined to dismiss O'Shaughnessy to well nigh oblivion as the author of "credit-able poetry!" But there are signs that O'Shaughnessy is coming into his own as one of the many very fine singing birds of the Victorian Era that the world will never willingly let die.

The poetical achievement of O'Shaughnessy is contained in four little books:—

"An Epic of Women" and other Poems by Arthur W. E. O'Shaughnessy. London: John Camden Hotten. 1870.

"Lays of France" (founded on the Lays of Marie) by Arthur W. E. O'Shaughnessy. London: Ellis & Green, 33, King Street, Covent Garden. 1872.

"Music and Moonlight." Poems and Songs by Arthur O'Shaughnessy. London: Chatto & Windus, Publishers. 1874.

"Songs of a Worker," by Arthur O'Shaughnessy. London: Chatto & Windus, Piccadilly. 1881.

"When his work has been thoroughly sifted," says Mr. Edmund Gosse, "there will be found a small residuum of exquisite poetry." I might demur to the word "small" were I concerned here to discuss O'Shaughnessy's poetical achievement. In addition to these poems O'Shaughnessy wrote, in conjunction with his wife, in 1875 a book of tales for children entitled *Toyland*. He was married in 1873 to Eleanor, daughter of Westland Marston, and she died in 1879. He died, as Dr. Garnett tells us, just as he was beginning to take an important place in general literature as English correspondent to *Le Livre*, and when he was about to contract a second marriage. His death occurred on 13th January, 1881. It was caused by the effects of a chill contracted when leaving the theatre on a bitterly cold night.

The drama which is reflected in these letters would possess a certain human fascination had the people associated with it been unknown to fame. Mrs. Frederick Snee could not have been more than twenty-three years of age when she met

INTRODUCTION.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy and two of his greatest friends of that period—John Nettleship (1841-1902), the well-known animal painter, whose illustrations to O'Shaughnessy's *Épíc of Women* include a quite Rabelaisian frontispiece; and John Payne, well known as the translator of the *Decameron* and many other books, and as a poet. To Payne the *Épíc* was dedicated. All three men appear to have been fascinated by the wit and charm of this young woman, who, as her letters indicate, had been exceptionally educated. I am not able to find any facts concerning her early years or concerning her husband, who was a traveller in the employment of Bass, the brewers, and was thus frequently absent from home. The correspondence with O'Shaughnessy indicates a woman of very considerable literary gifts. In 1872 the friendship came to an abrupt end, and, as we have seen, O'Shaughnessy married in the following year. The second act of the drama is exciting, although pathetic. Mrs. Snee was suddenly arrested on the charge of murder and the friends of a few years earlier gather round her, as this correspondence demonstrates, with commendable loyalty. Perhaps its quaintest note is the letter that Mrs. Snee writes to the young wife of O'Shaughnessy, who would seem to have behaved "like a brick" in this hour of tribulation of the somewhat equivocal friend of her husband's pre-married days. The charge as set forth in the Law Reports runs as follows:—

William Kingston Vance (24) and Ellen Snee (29) were indicted for unlawfully conspiring to kill and murder the said Ellen Snee. *Second Count*—To murder a person unknown. Mr. Francis with Mr. Horace Avory for Snee.

It was proved that Mrs. Snee had desired to commit suicide and that she advertised in the *Daily Telegraph* for drugs. Her letter was answered by a young medical man named Vance and one letter, which came to the dead-letter office and was opened, revealed the correspondence, including the following letter written by Mrs. Snee to Vance:—

I make no question you could be of service to me, the question is, will you? The *solatium* I offer is £100. The conditions these: I am tired of my life. I could do a great deal of good to a person I am interested in by leaving the world just now, and one way or another, I am resolved to do so, but, if possible, I should prefer not to wound

INTRODUCTION.

the feelings of the person who will gain most by my death by allowing it to be supposed voluntary. Besides, the most merciful verdict of a Coroner's jury will be sufficient to invalidate my will. Now, although I have some acquaintance with medicine and chemistry, I know of no drug or combination of drugs which would do this for me without risk of discovery. It is possible you may. It is not absolutely essential that the supposed means shall be painless or even very quick in their results. If some artery could be hurt with any plausible appearance of accident, assistance summoned too late, &c. I am willing to allow time for experiments, have no objection to a personal interview, and will give any assurance of *bona fides* that may be thought necessary.

Vance and Mrs. Snee were both arrested. When an officer came to arrest Helen Snee she said, "I have not harmed anyone. I did not intend to harm or murder any person. I have been very weak and ill and I meant the drugs for myself." She was living at the time at 48, Crowndale Road, Camden Town. John Payne acted as Mrs. Snee's attorney. Vance received a sentence of eighteen months and Mrs. Snee of six months. The jury recommended both prisoners to mercy, but we are not told how long this unhappy woman was in prison.

The judge described Mrs. Snee as "a lady of education and accomplishments, and of a somewhat romantic turn of mind;" and the Attorney-General, as "a lady of education, fond of literature and possessed of many accomplishments." Probably in our day the Judge would have been more merciful, but this was forty years since. One hopes that Helen Snee's later life was happier than were the years here described.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

London, October 19, 1916.

The trial will be found reported in the Central Criminal Court Papers, Vol. 86, and in the *Daily Telegraph* of June 1 and 2, 1876. It took place on Wednesday, May 31st, and Thursday, June 1st, 1876, before Mr. Justice Mellor.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

July 24, 1869.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

I have your letter, Prince, and I am so pleased with it. I fear we cannot meet on Monday; it is so strange, but you seem always with me now—more than once I have awoke with your name on my lips—that terrifies me, for I cannot prevent myself saying it before I am quite awake, however softly. Oh, Arthur, I nearly poisoned myself yesterday, and, with the fatigue of the day before still clinging to me, I lay half dead in my room all day. I said to the pillow, when I made it soft, "Now you are Arthur, you know"; then I gave it a little kiss, and rested my head on it and slept all the afternoon, oh, so wearily, and, though too weak to move, I wanted you as passionately as ever, dearest, and I am so pale to-day. Did you leave your spirit with me that night, and did only half of you go home? How hard it seemed to let you go! It seems so unnatural not to find you in the mornings. I always turn to find your hand and say something loving. I did not, though, before. What have you done to me? Ought I not to hate you? yet it is so sweet, I cannot write to-day. I feel so ill, but I love you always. Will you send me that dear little poem you repeated in Jack's room, ending with "*Le miroir ternis, et la flamme Morte*"—at least, I think that is right. O! my dear love, I want so to be with you.

Will you keep that Nocturne, the first you read, always with you, so that I can have it to make pretty when I am strong to come to you again?

Ever your own affectionate
HELEN.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

Aug. 2nd, 1869.

My dear Arthur,

You would perhaps like to know what took place in Newman Street to-day, and I must beg of you to say nothing to Jack or Mr. Payne about my having been first to you as he asked me, and I said no, though I have no intention of breaking my promise to you; I do not wish him to know of our arrangement as yet. He chatters of his love affairs all over the town; we need not. He behaved with more politeness to-day, though apparently by no means disposed to abandon his *rôle de grand seigneur—qui lui sied à merveille* (in his own opinion, evidently). He even graciously intimated the possibility of my being restored to favour on some future distant and indefinite occasion, on condition of my preserving great propriety of demeanour for the same vague period, which condescension I trust I acknowledged with due humility and deference.

I have suffered so keenly from his injustice that I seem to see very clearly now how foolish it is to fret as I have done about him, who, for no reason whatever, chooses to insult me, who has always been kind and gentle to him. Even now the influence of his presence is so great that I could almost pray you to excuse me from the fulfilment of my promise for next Wednesday, but that I feel how ungrateful a

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

return it would be for all your kind forbearance. Besides, I am almost anxious to place an insurmountable barrier in the way of my ever again becoming his slave, and when I have been with you, I shall never dare think of him again, in that way. He has suspected me wrongly; I will not. Oh, Arthur, my kind friend, I am still very unhappy; comfort me, I have only you now.

HELEN.

Don't, pray, tell Jack, and don't shew him this or talk of it yet to your friend, who might tell him.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

August 3rd, 1869.

My dear love,

I don't know what you will think of me, but please do not be angry and go away anywhere with Mr. Payne until you have seen me.

Fred has asked some people for Wednesday night. I did not know till this morning. I am certain you will not believe it, but it is quite true. I am as sorry as you can be, and will really come when you want me, if this does not make you too angry. Do not go to Newman Street until the time you would have gone if you had not seen me. Of course, you will not seem to have heard anything of the letter I left there on Sunday; he will be sure to shew it to you if he has not lost it.

August 4.—I was interrupted yesterday while writing this, and obliged to crumple it back hastily in my desk. I am so afraid you will be hurt, and think I don't care for your disappointment, but I am very sorry, and yet half grateful for any reprieve from what will make the estrangement from Jack final and irrevocable.

O! Arthur, when shall I leave off grieving after him? My heart is quite broken; it is cruel to tell you this, but please give me a few more days to think of him. I am so miserable, but you are so gentle and kind, and you understand. I will really come when you tell me. I will mind you in everything, only don't let him know just at first, until I can bear to think of him calmly. Please don't tell him, dear Arthur, will you? I have not seen him since Monday; don't tell him I sent to you then. I want to see him once more—only to look at him. I shan't ask him to make it up or kiss me, but I have his copy of Swinburne, and I must return it. Perhaps I shall go to-morrow at four.

Don't be angry, dear, it is all over, and you know I am almost happy when I see you, quite happy last Monday. I could get over it, only the child; it will always look at me with his eyes. I think I shall die soon without taking anything. I have begun to cough again, and my chest pains so sadly. O! dear, I send you the saddest kiss in the world. I cannot leave off crying. Don't leave me; you are the only person who knows everything, and you don't hate me. Will you write me something? 383, Kentish Town Road, you remember. I will come when you say, if you are not tired of it all.

Good bye, kind man.

Perhaps F. will go to Croydon on Saturday till Monday, but I am not sure; you shall name your own time, as you know your own arrangements best.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

August 4, 11 a.m.

My sweet, true friend,

I have your touching letter and open mine to enclose a line in reply. Do not mistake me, dear love; I know now too well which loves me best. I do not, since reading your gentle, unselfish letter, desire now to be on the same footing as before with Mr. Nettleship. All that I have felt since Monday has been your tenderness. And what I have grieved for has been the unkind treatment I have received from whence I least expected it. It has been done; the insult has been given, and nothing can ever place us in our former position, should he ever prove willing to forget, I could not. I have been too sorely hurt. I should not have disappointed you (and myself) of my free will; believe that, dear love. I shall love you very dearly—I feel that, not unless you wish it, however, though, in that case, I should always keep a most affectionate remembrance of you. You have made the most perfect contrast with his conduct it is possible to imagine. At a time too when you had every cause to be exceedingly displeased and even disgusted with mine, but you are chivalrous—a quality not often met with in the present century. When I have returned Swinburne, I shall never want to go to Newman Street again. I shall resolutely put all further thought of it from me, but think only of you. Don't think I throw myself into your arms in despair. I am profoundly affected by your conduct all through the affair—it has been irreproachable—you are like Bayard. If you have changed, dear, and do not want me to come now, I shall have the same opinion of you till death, and I should never have another lover. I am not nearly so sad as I was this morning. The more I see of your disposition the more charmed am I with its sweetness. If you wish it, you shall return the book to him, and I will not go again; it will not pain me at all. Only say.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

January 11th, 1870.

My Sweet,

Such an unexpected piece of good fortune! Mr. Pindar has a box for Thursday at Drury Lane, and has asked F. and me to share it with him, so this morning F., who came home at half-past three and informed me indistinctly that he hadn't been to the Alhambra—which convinced me that he had—gave me a sovereign to buy gloves, etc., for the occasion. I shall not spend nearly so much, and it will be quite easy for me to pay you now, you see.

If you come to-night,—he is really gone to Croydon and will not be back till eleven at least,—we will have some oysters for supper, if you do not mind the terrible pickle the house is in.

I do not think he will let me out on Saturday, as he will not want to go to Croydon again so soon, and when he is at home, he hates being alone.

I am so glad, dear, for now you can have good dinners till the 20th, and, as this money has made me all right, I shall be able to bring you some more on Monday next.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

I hope you will come; you will have plenty of other time for your poem, but you must be very good.

Yours very dearly,
HELEN.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

January 19th, 1870.

Arthur dear,

Will you come to me to-night? F. is going to Croydon.

I am not naughty now. I want so much to see you, for I am very sad, and I was so disappointed at not being able to come yesterday. A great, stupid man, who was attentive to us at Boulogne, came, and I had to get a dinner from a pastry cook, and we were all to have gone to the play in the evening, but I was tired and sad and would not go, so I remained at home and thought of you, dear. I am afraid something unpleasant is going to happen, for I cannot shake off this strange depression. I want you to come and let me sit in your lap and be petted. I want to hear your dear, gentle voice, and look at your pretty, bright eyes. Do come, dearest; it may be the last time before the new servant comes, and then F. will always know when you have been.

Could you bring some poems? I know that would do more to cheer me than anything. It is so long since I have heard you read. Perhaps you could go home first and take a return ticket from Russell Road. I want to see you so.

O, pretty, my heart is very heavy. You are not angry with me? Please forgive me if you are. I have a great deal to irritate me; it seems too much to bear sometimes—a daily, hourly terror and annoyance, and all suppressed till my heart is too full for tears even.

Please come, darling. See! I am just going to fold this, and the sun comes out quite bright through the grey, so I think that means you will come. I shall watch for you, darling. I want you terribly. I thought of you all last night, and was very unhappy. I cannot bear to be away from you. I often wake crying now, and put out my hand for yours. I dreamt the other night there was a revolution and stones were flying in the streets—one struck me on the breast, and the acuteness of the pain woke me; the pain was real and lasted some time after. I think it was nothing but an aching of the heart for you. I have often felt it contract in a kind of nervous spasm when I have been sad at being away from you, dear. O do come, please, Arthur, or I shall fret so grievously to-night.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

January 25th, 1870.

Golden Heart,

I am gratified, indeed, to receive a letter from you which I know cost you some pains, wearied as you must have been from the enchantment of the previous night, and I am more than ever charmed and moved by your kind and graceful words about yielding to my influence. Long may it last! for it will never work you anything but good. My sweet, you must not mind if Jack is sometimes apathetic, or even

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

violently aggressive in his demeanour. The wonder would be if he were not: it must be the very core of misery to see nothing around him but success, partial or complete (as, in your case, it will be), and for himself always failure. He loves you, my darling; I have seen it too plainly even to doubt. You may not see it, for his heart is full of bitterness just now, but take my word first; it is there, and be patient always with him, dearest, for the sake of the great giant that might have been, that he still is to himself, you know.

I have read your letter very carefully, and I stop and ponder a little on one word, "uncompromising." Do you know, dearest, I am rather sorry you were uncompromising? True, it had no apparent ill-effects, and you will think me very absurd, but I know so well how you looked—the little unquiet pucker in the forehead, the slight, scornful twitch of the upper lip; an expression that girls admire greatly—but have you never noticed how very ill men receive any sort of self-assertion from men younger than themselves, especially when, like you, they have a slight, frail, Dresden china exterior? A big man, without or with brains, may be uncompromising as he pleases. After all, Rossetti is unlikely to influence your future in any way, but now that you are acquainted I want him to be charmed with you, as I am, and it is not so much what you say about his poems that I rely on, as a certain nameless witchery of manner, a touching deference rather felt than seen, which you can assume if you please, and which is fairly irresistible.

My dear pet, I am so glad you were happy and enjoyed yourself. You do not tell me if you think it was Jack's doing.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

February 2nd, 1870.

My own dear love,

I know you will be anxious if you neither see nor hear from me, and I cannot bear to think of your dear little face looking wistfully round the refreshment room, only to meet with disappointment. I fret very much at being kept from you—it makes me quite feverish at times—but I have seen a doctor, dear, and he is shocked and insists on my remaining in bed, which is tiresome. Darling, "glode" is not the correct participle; it is "glided," and you will have to change the word for some other monosyllable such as "lurked"; I have looked for it. Don't leave the critics any handle. Do you think "Etherea" would be a pretty name for the book? or perhaps Mr. Payne could find some little-known Greek word signifying "brain-born," or some Greek equivalent for the German title he proposed. It would be so much prettier all in one word.

My pet, I have been very ill since I saw you, but hope to be better soon; at any rate, I cannot live much longer without seeing you. If I feel any better, I will come and look over the Froissart again to-morrow.

Don't engage yourself anywhere for the evening; I think F. will go away, or, at all events, the next.

Yours only,
HELEN.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

February 5th, 1870.

Dearest love,

I have commenced to read "L'affaire Clemenceau," and like the beginning so well that I feel obliged to lay it on one side and talk to you a little, especially thanking you for your kindness in sending it so promptly. I should feel ashamed to go on selfishly reading without some acknowledgment to my kind, gentle friend, who takes such pains to make me happy.

Dear Arthur, all my pleasures since last June seem to have come from you; you lend me all your pretty things. You are so sweet and kind that I have always some new delight, and I fear I say very little about it. I must endeavour to be still more loving and tender to my darling.

I am so happy to think you are stronger, dearest, and so proud of what you have done in those wondrous five weeks.

I have found all manner of curious rhymes in Morris; you need be in no apprehension of making any falser than some of his in this last part of the "Earthly Paradise." What do you think of this—

"Whose dusty leaves, well thinned and yellowing now,

But little hid the bright bloomed vine bunches.

There daylong 'neath the shadows of the trees," etc.

Further on "higher" is rhymed with "sire," which ought to answer Mr. Payne's "lure," "was" and "pass," "are" and "care," "man" and "wan," "upbear" and "gear." I could tell you many more, but wish to finish before F. can interrupt me; there are some far worse, but I cannot stay to look for them now.

I have been lying down until three o'clock to-day; I mean to do all my lying down on rainy days. I am really better, sweet, and looking forward so anxiously to Monday. F. has not been home to dinner; I can't think what is the matter. I shall be savage if I find you might have spent the evening with me after all.

I keep your book paper by me with the pretty red seals. I am like a child about anything you send me.

Love me, my sweet.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

April 30th, 1870.

O my sweet, what can I say?

I could not help it, I am too unhappy; please come to me. You should have kept the key. I had a faint hope you might have got in after all somehow and went through all the rooms saying "Arthur" when I came home. I did all I could for you; I am sure they thought there were too many gentlemen there already—we were so crowded in the supper room when you came—I had no enjoyment after, but they never thought of the cause. I cannot account for their rudeness, unless they have some suspicion of the truth. Things get about so. I don't know what

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

to think. Everybody wanted to see me home, but I came, by preference, with the second son and his wife in their carriage.

Will you come to me this evening. I shall be very unhappy until I have seen you.

HELEN.

TO HELEN SNEE.

Dearest Helen,

May 22nd, 1870.

I feel impelled this evening to write to you about the nature of love in me and of what I hope our love is to be to both of us.

I have probably often said, obscurely and imperfectly, much of what I write now—though, when with you, I have seldom had occasion to fall back on what has formed the matter of my thought while away from you—although that thought has been the one most ruling in my nature, and, therefore, now most intimately belonging to you. It is only at intervals that such a thought becomes vividly and definitely revealed to oneself, though it may be none the less, at all times, present to one and guiding and modifying all the feelings of one's life. I know—at least, I have often, in some manner or other, given you to understand—that I hope for the highest good that a human nature is able to receive from love. I hope for this from love, because I believe and feel the conviction that it must be so in my own nature. I look upon the incurring of a false love—that is, one which is not that fitted for and, so to speak, ordained to one, and which must, consequently, break off somewhere grievously and shamefully—as the worst evil that can befall a progressive and perfectible nature. It dismays, breaks off, for a longer or shorter time, all the impulse of one's being, and how long the injury of it may last in one no man can say. Without ever, perhaps, having expressed this conviction even to myself, it has always been with me from the beginning, and influenced me with an undefined sort of dread.

But of its existence and of its sad force of truth I have, as you know, had a real experience. Freely, foolishly, innocently, in the first instance, I gave my love. I yielded wholly to it, believed blindly in it, suffered, yet clung to it, strove long and desperately to retain even the blind delusion of it, and then fell into the dire swoon of bitterness, despair and doubt, from which the brightest nature, perhaps, only after long relapse, rises once more to some former level to set forward again—perhaps never recovers at all.

I believe that through the sweet concurrence of many saving influences in my life, I was past all hope and, indeed, effort on my part, rescued from this first moral wreck of my nature.

You were shown to me, brought to me, gradually drawn into my life, and I gradually taken into yours. Was there, however imperfectly conceived, a similar want in both our natures at that time? There must have been so.

I dwell—as you know we both often do when together, in imagination—fondly over all the gradual circumstances of our becoming more and more associated, finally and, we hope, truly united. In spite of the hopelessness of my heart's

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

dejection, how soon—at the mere undefined hope brought by your presence—did it begin to yearn up again in the old direction and resuscitate the paralyzed remnants of love, faith and passion that still held its former life. A work of reconstruction commenced insensibly from the first. Sympathy after sympathy re-awakened warmth, heat, passion returned in soft tides revivifying my inmost being; the vision of a bright, o'er-reaching purpose or harmony again illumined me till I seemed once more to have risen to the level of a life from which a heaven might at least be seen in the distant beauty of a noble ideal.

This ideal—which restores to my life the right to a conscious nobleness and the glory of a visioned heaven—is once more none other than the one already pursued, as I thought, to such mocking result of ruin—the one born in or with me, to abide, like a strong, bright burning pillar of flame, lighting me more and more to the full attainment, or like a faint uncertain and flickering radiance, now blown to brightness and now ready to pale away and be lost for ever. It is the ideal of a love consistent with and manifested in the living forward impulse of the nature—a love, that is, belonging to every part of the nature, not to a few parts only—and, consequently, of course, equally whole in its occupation of two reciprocal natures.

There, dearest Helen, I have weakly expressed (and somewhat awkwardly, I fear) the thought that, in an unexpressed, unformed, unthought-of condition is passion to my life, and, indeed, life itself to all my faculties.

How could it be otherwise than ruin, more or less irretrievable, to be self-deceived into the belief of having realized such as this, and to fall thereby instead upon one of the low, restricted counterfeits formed for natures incapable of desiring anything higher than a gross material interchange (a sufficient one, no doubt, for merely material natures), or an unennobling, unfulfilling “half love with half one’s heart”?

Thus it has always been in the hope and belief, however enfeebled, for a time, by past failure, in the truest and highest kind of love, that I have loved you.

Any other kind of lesser feeling designated by the true love—if possible, in one sense, still far too subservient to the unfulfilled but unquenched desires of the supreme spirit in me, to be able to create a lesser life of inferior limited passions and consolations; whether this ordinary form of love which we see everywhere at all times be nearly always a “half love,” a *pis-aller* found after fallen desires after the higher thing, or whether it is sufficient to fill certain ordinary natures, is nothing to me at present.

However, our love began, while at first softly drawing us more and more towards each other, it was, from the very first, conceived by me within the sphere of desire for a supreme soul-filling passion. I cannot imagine that, if all again seemed lost as before or were really known to be unattainable, I could find any lower source of solace, nor indeed care to stoop to it.

But, dearest, our love of a year’s duration has reached a stage at which it must be, and be recognized as a noble progressive part of our being, not unconcerned with any of the highest and most secret aims of our proper development; it has reached a stage when it must be this or cease to be anything at all. The transitory

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

attachments of the world which begin and end in nothing, never, in any form whatever, save one of hypocrisy, attain such a duration, which would, indeed, be impossible to the trivial and perishable nature of them. The fact of such duration alone would be sufficient, I think, in almost any instance, to indicate the possibility of raising an attachment, however conceived on either side, into a true and lasting union.

I often think that, for want of something in the character of thousands of mere triflers with love, many a real opportunity is lost, many a fair inmost beginning repressed, many a golden offer of heaven thrust aside; for love appears to me, indeed, as the offer of heaven—as a hand held out to take our hand and lead us up to high stages of being that our desolate, solitary natures, full of undeveloped sympathies, and chilled and blighted aspirations, will never otherwise attain to.

Oh, how bitter and appalling is the thought that, for some little imperfection in our portion of the nature, for the weakness of a will, the blindness of a doubt, the passing bitterness of a heart diseased with the ills of life, one may lose for ever, perhaps, the fairest and most precious good that might have been ours—the sole salvation of our entire being from imperfection, bitterness and despair endlessly prolonged.

Yet the more horrible the thought appears to me the more does it become the conviction of a thing that is, that must be. I have even come to believe that almost every love attachment broken off trivially in some trivial first phase may have had in it a sufficient germ of something better to have developed into a true love-union, had there been enough of sincerity in the two natures which it brought into transitory interchange.

True love, indeed, could never be the vapid, thoughtless, aimless sort of sensation that trivial people sometimes find sufficient for the amusement of their trivial dispositions. The love that is to have anything to do with one's life must certainly partake in the influences that keep and regulate that life. As to live a noble life requires a man to be possessed of certain individual endowments of moral strength and character, so to love well and nobly is possible only to natures in which there is some individual force of earnestness and sincerity. It is, I am sure, plainly reasonable to think so. In a life, the continual bane of which is instability of feeling and purpose to be overcome—to the attainment of any ever so small a result of good—only by constant and vigilant exercise of will, we can scarcely expect that the heart alone should live on infallibly and unfalteringly without care to keep and purpose to strengthen and direct it, with certain more blind attractions of affinity alone compelling it in this or that direction.

A. O'S.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

July 12th, 1870.

Thanks for the dear letter; you see I answer it immediately.

O my sweet, forgive me; I could do nothing when I came home yesterday. All the pain in the world seemed packed into my poor little head, it ached so, and I have found the reason. When I run away early in the morning to see you, I

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

generally forget my breakfast, with one invariable result, whether I return, or stay at the Museum, my head aches fearfully; tho' I remember when I could leave my breakfast and go out all day without such unpleasant consequences. And the electric evening made it much worse. I felt perfectly sick and wretched. I couldn't have copied out the odious little story you sent or even one of your own delicious poems to save my life.

It seemed, however, as if the Spirit of Poesie had a mind to punish me for my coquettish behaviour with him of late; he kept suggesting apparently the most glorious things to my tortured brain, too weak to seize them, and hands nerveless to write. O my heart's treasure, do not be hard with me. I feel I must keep my promise about my stupid rhymes, but wait, dear, I want to alter something, and to-day I have all yesterday's household work to do and plenty more to-morrow. You shall surely have the poor stuff soon, but don't let me thirst till then for your divine words. Happy poet! whose brain-children are all fair and straight, and stand proudly in a radiant line courting the sunlight; have a little mercy on my poor weaklings, and let them creep to you when their poor mother has a little courage. Always look when you have written "lightning" if that unlucky "e" has crept in unawares. I was all alone with your beautiful Thunder Angel, and he scared me with his great black wings.

Caroline thought it a delicious evening to buy needles and cottons, and F. stayed away all night. How I moaned and suffered!

It is surely one proof how I love you that I always want your hand when I am ill. You are the first and only one who has made me feel like that, for I am very fond of being alone, particularly if anything is wrong with me, and makes me more "ugger-lee" than usual. Where did you find those pretty angel names? Tell me how the poor foot is going on. I thought of it in my pain last night and wondered if it ached too, and wanted soft little hands to pour a thin thread of cool silver water over it and a red little mouth to kiss away the fiery pain. It makes me so happy to know you love me, dear. I shall see you on Thursday, come out early and walk slowly through the park.

Always your very own
HELEN.

I shall stay at the Museum on Thursday to read.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

St. Swithin, 1870.

My own dear child,

I am so sorry for you, and I don't know what to say to comfort you. I cry out with all my voice against the continuation of this ruinous state of things. Arthur, it must not be. You shall not be so lost and tortured; my own darling! It will as surely drive you mad as it is true that the finest and subtlest piece of mechanism is the easiest to put out of order.

I had a faint hope at first—a very faint one—that the shame of your knowing, and a desire to keep you with her might have led to a resolute stand against further

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

temptation. It has unfortunately proved otherwise, and the only change you need now look for will be for the worse, at the bottom of which, harsh as it may sound, you will find a dull, dogged kind of contentment that no further concealment was necessary since you had found it out.

O! my love, my love, your poor fevered letter breaks my heart. Dearest Arthur, there is no hope—none—and you must come away. Don't sacrifice yourself to a mistaken sense of duty, as poor Charles Lamb did, and have your life and works spoiled like his.

That dear mother that you loved and revered dropped down stark dead when you made this woeful discovery, and you are grieving for her now. I cannot comfort you till grief has had its way; the only alleviation to such sorrows is change of scene. You must not stand gazing hopelessly at the grave. You know the dead cannot return. You know you will never enter the house again, feeling, as you did, when you ran up the steps for the last time before that terrible trouble awaited you behind the closed door. My dear child! And your happiness so precious to me! This going out of town is the last sacrifice I shall permit you to make if I have any influence with you. After that, think that you belong to yourself about as much as the sun does, and have as much right to drop into ordinary life as he to hide his light for ever. Poets should never have family ties. You might tear your own heart like a young pelican and not do the least good, remember! There is nothing to be done with certain troubles, except walk away from them. Sooner or later you will find you must; better, then, before it has time to make an indelible mark on all your future life. It is not you who will be in fault, little one, and don't let a living soul know the reason. You must feel how impossible it would be to do anything great under such debasing circumstances; besides, your temper would be completely soured.

Had you not better let Hotten go his own way with the book? Tell him to make no announcements during your absence, but get on with what remains to be done, and, when all is ready, keep it back till November? There is scarcely anyone in town now. Let me know

(Incomplete.)

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

July 25th, 1870.

My own Sweet,

Your dear kiss lingers on my lips yet, it was so good of you to give it me. I see you now, resting your little foot on the step and bending forward to my face as a loving brother might. In my delight at receiving that dear little kiss, and sorrow at leaving you, I did not remember my debts until too late to recall you. I hope the enclosed will cover them: 5/- for the ticket, 2/- for ices—is that right? and 1/- for the day I was purseless at the Museum. Perhaps sending for the order will delay my letter. I should be very sorry if you were disappointed when you call for it. I was reading "Le Place de Tigre" yesterday, and F. wanted more room on the

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

office table and pushed the book out of his way. I almost cried, and said I would not have Arthur's book touched by anyone but myself, which made him laugh. And O! Arthur, I hurt my arm against the door, and it is black and aches very much and F. said he did not care, and there was no one to pity it, for you were gone.

I am delighted at your selection of Gautier's charming stories. I don't believe there is anyone who would love them so much. How delicious is "L'oreiller d'une Jeune Fille," and "Laquelle de Dent." I have read no further because I dread coming to the end before you return, my own darling. Never were you more beautiful than on Saturday, your sweet face glorious with the music which seemed to fill you, and your gracious figure!

And, dear, I have both your poor little opera lists, greedy that I am! but I did not know that I had one in the Wagner book. Shall I send one in my next letter?

Mind you write to Lawrence's, not here, and though your letters will be my sole consolation, do not write when you can spend the time more profitably to yourself by the sea. I should like, however, to receive the first letter as soon as possible—if only a line to tell me that you are safe and happy, and have the 8/- enclosed in this.

F. teazes me dreadfully about tickets for the Gardens. He has made me promise to ask you to write to whoever it is that gives them away at the Museum, for 4 for Saturday next. They could be left in the hall, if you think proper to do so. I am very much ashamed of this request; I think you know I would not be so troublesome of my own accord, but F. really gives me no peace about it. If you can't, as is very probable, say so in a little note addressed here, that he may see. I don't want him to guess I have others, and address the P.O. letters to the initials "Y.Q.," in case of accident he might think of the name or

(Incomplete.)

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

July 27th, 1870.

My sweet Arthur,

Thanks for your quick reply to my letter. I have scarcely time to answer it fully this morning as my aunt is staying with me for a few days.

I glided, like a pale ghost in white muslin, to the chemist's for your letter; the cabalistic initials much surprised him, and he could hardly bring himself to part with it.

How true it is that the grief of parting is with "lui qui reste!" To think of your having to bargain with unconscionable seaside shopkeepers! Still, it is employment for you, and you have little time for sadness.

I have now reached, alas! the eighth stripe in the Tiger's Skin, "Sylvain," and a more delicious fancy never dawned on poet's imagination. I fear you will have reason to be jealous of our dear Theophile, for my affection for him is fast deepening into adoration. Make haste and send him your book.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

Yesterday, in the twilight, I read tenderly to myself Keats' "Eve of St. Agnes." I was soon entranced beneath the well-worn spell, for I nearly know it by heart, and sadly called to mind the times when I had seen you—

"Ethereal, flushed and like a throbbing star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose."

and wished for you near me again, to "melt into my dream."

Your sketch of the Phantom Ship is weird enough. I have attempted one, but find one great obstacle in not being sufficiently familiar with the structure of a ship. You have now an opportunity of studying them more nearly. You say nothing of your talk with N. and P. after I left you. I am so glad you are well.

Shall I continue to write to the Post Office or to Ethelbert Road? You say you will go soon for a letter, so I suppose the former. I shall go soon to your house, but cannot say when. I suppose there is always someone at home. Don't think I forget you if you are even sometimes disappointed of a letter; I think I could rhyme a little now if I can steal a few moments. My heart is full of delicious sadness and opens to the dying summer like a rose. Never mind about the tickets. Serves F. right.

Always your own

HELEN.

No repetition of the worst trouble, I hope? Do they make you pay a penny for my letters? They don't at some country post offices.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

July 29th, 1870.

My own Arthur,

Until last night I had not realized the fulness of sorrow your prolonged absence causes in me.

Aunt had gone early. F. remained out late. I did not mind that, but I felt so very lonely, dear; all the warmth had gone out of the day, and out of my life, it seemed. A chill wind sighed at the open window, and I shivered in my thin white dress; it looked so unreal in the dim light. I could not read any more poetry, and such a dreadful hunger to see you rose up in my heart—the old terrible longing—and I could no longer satisfy it by hurrying on my cloak and running to you. I knew there could not so soon be a letter, yet I went for one, and again this morning, and came back sad and bewildered as if you were angry with me and would not say the reason. I shall be no better now till you return. My restlessness increases and prevents my becoming interested in anything. I shall not be able to go to your house—it would be like visiting your grave—and I should not be calm or able to help crying to see your dear flowers and books all so dead without you, dear. Do you think you shall be away more than another week? I have just eaten my poor forlorn little dinner very miserably. I might have been trying to emulate De Quincey last night, to judge by my seediness this morning; still, there is another reason. I think I have mentioned to you F.'s idiosyncrasy of convulsive

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

dreaming. He awoke hysterical last night, and I always, for my own sake, endeavour to soothe him into quiet again, telling him everything is right and whatever has disturbed him is untrue, carefully avoiding anything that might induce him to talk about it, which, notwithstanding, after an interval of sobbing, he invariably does. I wonder if any words of mine could be forcible enough to make you understand the horror that lays hold on me, when in darkness, broken only by ghastly streaks of blue summer lightning. I am compelled to listen to the wild and terrible fantasies of a diseased imagination. Can you think of a more awful infiction? And I do so beg and pray that he will not tell me, and he always will! It recalls to me a time when I was very small—so small that aunt will not believe I can remember it—when a very, very ugly old lady used to visit my mother, and I can remember now the expedients I adopted to avoid looking at her. Alas! un-availing, for someone always turned me round to be admired; our eyes met—those dreadful malignant green and yellow eyes nearly hidden by stiff, white bristles, that mysterious ever-moving wrinkle where other natural people had their mouths. O! I always shrieked and was carried away—a naughty child, to have no sugar in my tea that day. The portrait of that poor old lady exists now and I know where, but for worlds I would not see it.

O! my Arthur, what a letter I have written to you; will you forgive it? I can do no better until you make me happy again. Say when you will come home, here, to me. The story of Undine is reversed, and, after waking my soul and teaching it to love and depend on you, you take it away from me, for it follows you, to whom it must belong, and here it is not.

From your poor slave,
HELEN.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

August 1st, 1870.

My dear Arthur,

I am indeed sorry that you should still be annoyed by domestic grievances, though I hoped for nothing better from your unusual determination; and I shall be surprised if you return without having come to a more decided expression of feeling on both sides. That anyone should presume to interfere with you is incomprehensible, but I suppose no one ever yet stood fairly with their own relations. They persist in looking at you through a glass, that magnifies terribly, either your faults or talents according to their fancy; sometimes they use the small end, and treat you as a child as long as you allow them to do so, and it is hard to maintain your dignity in the presence of those who have seen you eat pap and cry for sugar. They are always impracticable. Do they not know us *au fond*? and exactly the things, which said, will most wound our nascent pride. Are they ever likely to admit that we have become riddles to them? I say we, but my mother was a proof of another hallucination; if she opened the rarest book in the world, and a slip of paper scribbled by me had fallen out of it, she would have read that first and admired it most. Which is the worst case?—for us, I mean. I did well to keep my books for this weary time of

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

your absence, dear; I have lost all wish to go out, I hardly stir from my seat. I read till I am stupid and still I read. The weather is oppressive—always thundering and lightning and frightening me out of my senses. My cats are phosphorescent, and becoming fearfully intelligent and human. Tim is a sphinx. Your white pussy is an amiable sleepy ball of white thistledown; the black one is a lithe and agile familiar who caresses me with violence and keeps her fiery eyes fixed on mine. What passion there is in those sombre jewels! What can be the secret she constantly whispers in my ear? Some dark magic, I am certain; the only spell I should care to learn would be how to keep you mine. I have finished Gautier's book, and am not ashamed to own that the story of the poor little cricket made me cry very heartily.

Would you believe that, in one day, I have read the whole of "Eugénie Grandet" with the greatest interest? May I be pardoned for having ever spoken disrespectfully of Balzac? It is a wonderful work, and to me perfect. I wish you would not use that irritating violet ink—some parts of your letter are barely legible—one word I cannot make out: "You have smoothed things down to a more endurable m———? (what is it) on account," etc.

Little has occurred since you went away; during aunt's visit, we went to St. James's Theatre and saw Goldsmith's play and a burlesque that has made Fred load the piano with trashy songs, which he sings perfectly out of tune. By the way, that "Monographie du Bourgeois" might have been written for him. I see you have maliciously pencilled some of the traits, "Il manie le calembourg assez facilement pour être insupportable en société." Is it not exact? Last Saturday we were at Hampton Court, not the palace or park; we sat fishing in a punt all day and caught twenty-seven little bits and a curiosity which I had a mind to submit to your inspection, the boatman declaring it to be "between a roach and a dace." An odd fish! but my heart ached for the poor things. It was very cool and quiet on the river, and I wanted to think of something to write about, but the only inspiration that came to me was a very material one, and resolved itself into a vulgar but perfectly irrepressible longing to have some ham and eggs with my tea. I don't know what could have suggested such an idea, of which

(Incomplete.)

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

August 5, 1870.

My dearest Arthur,

Am I greatly to blame if the book that came here on Tuesday morning had for me the importance of a letter? It made me very miserable, and you should only lend me books of that kind when you are at hand to reassure me; if you do not forget, "Madame Bovary" affected me in a similar manner. I am very quick to feel anything like a reproach from you. I know you will think it absurd, but the book prevented my calling for your letter until this morning. I so dreaded the depression I should have suffered if there had been none. I find it has been there

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

three days, and yet is not in answer to mine posted last Tuesday morning. I am always fearful of losing you, and more acutely sensitive than ever now you are away, and I seem not to have strength to endure any kind of doubt; my heart grieves so when I cannot get to you. It is possible it never entered your mind to compare me with "Fanny," but the question of her lover have been put to me by you, and have been answered in much the same manner, and the least action of anyone dear to us seems to have some meaning. If you had written across the cover, "Your portrait," I could not have been more wounded. Did Mr. Payne recommend you to lend it to me?

I will go to you on Monday evening. I got for you a new copy of your little red Nocturnes, and would have bought also the Mazurkas, but was not sure if you had them, in which case I dare say you would lend them to me. A companion book scarcely as thick, price 6/-, contains the Ballades, the Berceuse, and some other of his longer works, the name of which escapes me for the present. I did not get it—the contents seemed so difficult. I purchased, however, the 7th and 8th books of the "Lieder," folio size (you can get them complete, all eight for 4/-, octavo), and four of them 8vo. vol., viz., "Forest Scenes" (easy) of Schumann, Schubert's Dances, Beethoven's smaller pianoforte pieces, and the complete piano works of Weber, so you will have something to play to me when you come. Let me have one more letter, dear; I am longing to see you.

Always your affectionate

HELEN.

Is it possible that anything in my last letter can have displeased you? I feel so unaccountably miserable this morning.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

October 21, 1870.

Dear, dearest Arthur,

For pity's sake write to me—something very kind and soothing; perhaps it is because I am so weak and nervous just now, but the most terrible fancies beset me about losing you, my darling. O, Arthur, if you cease to love me my life would be too bitter to be borne. I swear I would spill it like water; you could not hurt me so? The demon of jealousy holds my heart in his cruel hands. I cannot bear it, dear. I shall be ill again; I would never eat another thing if I thought you did not care for me as much as at first. I thought you would come to-night—my mother had to leave me for a few hours, and I felt certain you would come—but you did not, and I felt very lonely, and at last I cried so much I can scarcely see now to write. You know the weather prevented my coming as I promised on Wednesday and Thursday. Did you not care? I wanted to see the other reviews and letters, but you are not thinking of me now. Do you go to that glove shop? I could find it in my heart to kill you, if you do. O! Arthur, say something to me; there is such a black horror creeping round me. I am frightened. What is it? Not a line from F. yet; that is strange.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

Altogether it is like the awful silence before thunder, and I have the same dreadful terror on me; I cannot keep from crying. When shall I see you? Don't you want to see me any more? I know I shall die this year after all; I don't get strong at all.

I want to be loved! I will not stay here; the wind and rain frighten me at night. Cruel Arthur not to write or come! Will you come on Sunday and take me to the birds? not if you have been speaking to the girl at the glove shop. In that case I don't want to see you ever, only to get rid of this horrible life. When you lose me you lose more than you know. I have been your good fairy.

Forgive me if anything in this seems unkind. I am in no state to judge of its effects, but I do not intend it so, dear.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

October 24, 1870.

My dear love,

I think I shall best reward you for your sweet letter by letting you know at once of the decided improvement in my health. I feel quite differently to-day, my head clear and light, and the leaden languor almost gone. I enclose the photographs you wished for and shall have other copies soon. From Elliott & Fry, nothing yet. How kind and patient you were yesterday, dearest! How shall I ever thank you? If I were ever to discover that you had deceived me, Arthur, after the perfect reliance you make me place in your sincerity, a knife in my heart would be more merciful. I think I should fall dead.

I have been reading the "Masque of Shadows" very slowly and carefully all to-day. Don't omit, dearest, to thank Mr. Payne for me for his kindness and courtesy in sending me the book. I am very sensible of the honour, and shall always prize it greatly.

Dr. Tate was much pleased with me this morning; he did not, however, advise me to go out yet. He spoke of you as an exceedingly clever young man and thought the "longer poem quoted in the 'Sunday Times' strange." I don't think the patriarchal element was sufficiently apparent for him. You see there was positively nothing in it about "liking to be a father!"

I assure you, my darling, I have been quite good, and taken all my physic, one cup of tea and slice of toast for breakfast, little meat at dinner and the same at tea; is that not well? I no longer feel that dreadful thirst. Mind that I have all the notices of your book at once, and keep an account of how much they cost.

Whenever you feel any temptation to be faithless to me, look at the piteous little portrait inclosed, and remember that there is not a nerve or vein in that frail little shape but has thrilled in a keen ecstasy of love for you, and remember there is nothing she would not do at your desire, and when you do not love her any more, she will just turn her pale little tired face to the wall and die of the great pain in her heart.

You never would do that.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

I hope to go out for a little in the morning. How delicious when I am able to run across the park to you as I used. Thanks again, my sweet love, for your dear letter.

You know I am always your

HELEN.

My mother is charmed with you, and has talked of your "delightful conversation" all day.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

October 27, 1870.

Dearest Arthur,

I am so glad you are invited to Madox Brown's—I knew you would be; you were not bound to me, and if you had been, understanding each other as we do, my sweet, no excuse is necessary; we have all our lives for each other.

Please let me know everything about the Museum business; perhaps I can think of something—my head is clear enough now, and you must not any longer think of me as an invalid. I have just demolished a lunch that would shock you.

I am very serious about it. Surely it cannot be serious—such a mere trifle!

O, my Arthur, if you lost it to-morrow, I feel strong enough for both, but I will not believe it possible. Is it not a great comfort in trouble to know that you are loved?

Enjoy yourself very much this evening, dearest; I still think of you in the midst of your triumphs when I am going to bed. Please don't like any of the women much. I shall look forward to hearing all the news to-morrow night.

Thanks for the "Era." I have had an offer for principal parts in Calcutta from Mr. English, but did not think it would quite do.

I send you the long-promised wretched things from Elliott & Fry's, though I am heartily ashamed of them. It was a much more passionate sensitive face that crept heart-broken by your side one memorable evening last November, pleading in vain for a tender word of forgiveness. However, that is all past now, and we have nothing but happiness to anticipate. How is it that the heart always contracts at that thought, as if to remind us that on many other half-forgotten occasions we have made ourselves the same golden promise? Is it a half regret for the mad zest that our very uncertainty and despair gave to the wine of life, or because everything has ended so far? Well, we know how, but again and again we swear that this shall not be so, nor shall it, love. My will to keep you is as strong as Death; beware how you forsake me.

Yours with the tenderest love,

HELEN.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

November 11th, 1870.

Dear Arthur,

I have copied your poem in a perfect galop of enthusiasm. I never enjoyed writing any of your pieces more. The swing of it caught me up, and I felt not the least fatigue, though I had written nearly to exhaustion before beginning it.

Indeed, I was so pressed for time that I yielded to Clara's wish, but the appearance of the MS. dismayed her, and she could not decipher a word.

In two places in your own copy you have placed a word over, without lining out the original one, and in both cases I have preferred the first written, not without thought—"upward" is better than "endless" in that line—the 4th of the 8th verse—grander, fuller, I think, and avoids the sibilant letters, which are sure to occur often enough. The other "receive" for "glance at" runs more smoothly; don't you think so? I fancy that you read it so. I haven't copied your queer spelling of "daining and faining," but it shows, as does the writing, the dash and *verve* with which it was written. I hope there are no mistakes, but I shall be delighted to do it again for you, if necessary.

You were charming, indeed, last time! I long to see you again; pray go on writing as fast as you can. I shall be alone to-morrow and Sunday too, I think. Clara is gone, thank goodness. I am impatient to know the result of to-morrow's business, but I am troubled for you no longer; all is sure to be well, whichever way it is decided.

Always yours,
HELEN.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

December 23rd, 1870.

My dear Arthur,

I have a great deal to say to you, and no time to say it. You wounded me deeply by going away without kissing me, and you would certainly have made amends had you come before going to Camden Square or even after—I listened for you long after midnight. You never will understand me, I see. How many times must I tell you that I love you as much as ever? so much that the least appearance of coldness on your part so frightens and bewilders me that it quite checks the expression of any sort of feeling as on Wednesday morning, when I had something to say to you which it is too late to say now, and would only vex you to know.

If you are very unhappy, come to me this evening, but I must be busy and you must not be unreasonable; I can ill spare the time these few words occupy

I could scarcely forgive you the tears I shed on Wednesday, but that I see you have been unhappy too. If you would let nothing disturb the idea of my love for you you would not pain me as you do. It is your doubts which make all go wrong and my life wretched, for I cannot do what I have to do rightly with these constant disturbances. You will surely send me into a decline.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

I am so sorry for your fall; yes, do come this evening, and let me pity it.
If you ever talk of giving up poetry, I shall indeed have been mistaken in you.

Always your
HELEN.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

January 11th, 1871.

My dear Arthur,

You have had very little from me during these sad eleven days of '71. What can I say now, except that I am wretched? I have finished your brown book. I see now your resemblance to Rodolphe, and am the more convinced that what I always feared is too true. He attempted to drive Mimi out of his heart with Juliette; he thought he hated and despised her; he wrote verses about her, and shrieked his misery aloud, to her great content; so do you. I, must I *porter le deuil de Francine*? I know what you will say, but nothing will ever take away that thought that poisons all our kisses. No one was ever so unhappy as I, and soon I shall die; my cold increases and has attacked my chest. I grow thinner every day. I sometimes think my lot would be unendurable if I did not love you; as it is, I think a plunge in the lake of fire of the prophets could hardly give me a new sensation. You must come to me; I can never say now when I shall be at home, as all my movements are directed by the caprice of an irresponsible being—but come, notwithstanding, and wait till our return if we should again be out. Tell Elizabeth to do anything you want and make your tea or dinner, as the case may be. Be sure I shall never stay away a night again at Croydon after taking this cold there, and, if very late, you can have a bed here, or even if we are gone to a theatre, stay; you see, I never know beforehand.

Oh, I love you, dear.

Always your
HELEN.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

January 13th, 1871.

My own dear love,

You are mine still, are you not? This is the first time since Christmas Eve that I have been able to count on four clear hours to myself, and I have so much to tell you, dear. I hope to see you every minute, as I sent you a note this afternoon; still, something may prevent your coming, and it is so lonely waiting. I heard your knock last night, my darling. I had given you up, and it seemed to make me more ill, but not to be allowed to see you quite distracted me. I cried till nearly morning, and then had a cruel dream about your loving somebody else and kissing her before me, and I thought I begged her to let me have you again for only one day and night, and then I would go away and die, and she would not, and you both laughed at me; and then I woke in such agony, it seemed so real. I wanted to dress and go out in the snow to sit on that seat in the park, so that you would surely pass me in the

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

morning. If F. had not been there crushing me against the wall, and scolding me for crying, I should have done so. Arthur, do you love me as much as ever? If not, love me as much as you can, and don't let me know the truth. I feel it will not be for long. I over-rated my strength when I thought I could bear with F.; he is slowly killing me, and I think he means to, under the appearance of kindness. I waste daily. I ought to have told you to come as soon as possible after 7, as F. is gone to a theatre and did not tell me until 2 p.m. to-day. I can make no plans when things are so uncertain, and I cannot talk freely when he is here, but I shall die very soon if I can't get to see you alone; can it not be at Jack's? I only want to rest my head against you and talk. It was too late for a post letter to-day, and so F. would always make it, and when I thought of the evening being lost I was in despair. I thought of going to Jack's on the chance of finding you there, though I should not stir out with this cough, and at least to leave some messages, and have the gratification of talking about you, but I thought you might misunderstand and be vexed, perhaps.

Why did you come so late last night? I suppose you are going out and enjoying yourself very much, making fresh acquaintances too. O, Arthur, I feel completely broken; I cannot write. I do not believe I shall ever be well again. O, Arthur, do be kind to me. You will have plenty of time to love other women when I shall be dead.

Dear love, it will not be long. It would take all your love to rouse me to live now, and you will not give it me. It is so terrible to get by every post kind letters from other people, and none from you. Mind, if you do not come, it will kill me. Even if you have promised to go elsewhere, give it up for my sake. You do not know the harm you caused me by telling me what you did that other evening. It aches in my memory, persistently to the exclusion of the kind things you said, which I would fain remember and think true. It is like ashes in my mouth when I try to eat, and it was so easy not to tell me, but you would not spare me one pang.

You are always well and strong, and cannot conceive the effect of a few carelessly cruel words on a sick imagination—sick to death. I think I know now what Prometheus endured.

Does this letter make you not love me? You know I never could help writing that of which my heart was full. I feel too surely that there is a barrier between us. You have been so reticent each time I have seen you. You could go and see another woman on my day, when I was alone and wanted you so much, and so ill that I could scarcely bear my hair to be dressed or my pretty new dress put on, and you left me to shed bitter tears at a time when every drop was like blood from my heart, and did me as much mischief.

God knows when I shall have a day again. I am constantly interrupted even when scribbling these few words. I cannot bear not to know what you are doing. I cannot write, I am too sick at heart; I will try and wait until you come, without getting more ill, but I believe I am dying. Don't, for pity's sake, say those things to me; they prevent my sleeping and make me sad.

I do love you so.

HELEN.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

January 19, 1871.

Dear Love,

Do not blame me for your disappointment of Tuesday last; he did not go.

I have expected to see you since. Are you so angry? I will keep my promise very faithfully on the first opportunity. You know how hard things are for me now; be a little patient, darling, and, above all, do not abandon me, thinking it all of no use; that fear is so terrible to me, and I have it always. We went to the Old Masters yesterday—mother too. They are such gems that we could see very few in three hours—a lifetime would barely do them justice. A "Worship of the Magi," Mantegna, is marvellous. There is one pale saint of Fra Lippo Lippi's, the sole work of his, exhibited, a piece of fresco cut out of the wall and framed. You should go, if only to catch a glimpse of Titian's Salome in the fourth gallery. I saw seven Greuzes in my brief passage—all delicious. And you must see Titian's school-master by Moroni, but I cannot tell you half. I am going again, and you must not let it pass; you can see nothing after four. I can fix no time to ask you to come, much as I wish to see you. I never know when we are going out, so you must chance it. I want you sadly. Your books have been a great consolation, for I have been very ill all the while, and my head aches now from yesterday's pictures.

Please keep being fond of me. My temper is quite unreliable under present circumstances; don't mind it. My heart is always the same. I suffer so much and shall soon have to suffer some more. My life is made of wild fits of delight and pain. Don't think of anyone else or you will cruelly hasten matters.

Till I die and after that

Your own

HELEN.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

December 24th, 1871.

My pretty sweet,

I am very much afraid I shall not send you a nice letter because I wish to do so with an earnestness that has the effect of paralyzing all my endeavours to be clear. I had finished a dear, long one yesterday, but it was torn up (Fred is very much changed and was in a passion), and I cried so much I could not write two consecutive words, and went to bed so unhappy about it, and I cannot remember one word of what cost me such pains to write for you. I do not seem able to shake off the heavy despondency that has possessed me so long; I sit and think of you in a vague, stupid manner, now and then wishing that my chest would not ache so badly. If you were here, I could only sit by you and look at you; any effort to express what I feel, only too intensely, sends a bitter wave of tears to my tired eyes, which leaves me more helpless and dull than at first.

I am sorely troubled. Do not be angry or leave me again. Fred has not gone to Croydon yet (9 o'clock, Sunday night), and wears once more the morose and gloomy face I remember so well. I am hardly ever alone for a few minutes. He

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

has quite changed since you came, though he was sorry he tore my poor letter when he saw how I grieved about it.

I went yesterday to mother, and thought I should never be able to tear my weary little body out of her big easy chair.

I sat with her nearly all day, wondering if you already regretted coming back to me.

We have not seen or heard from Mr. Payne, and I have kept my promise.

I sent to-day's "Sunday Times," containing a notice of your book, to Aunt Robinson. We must keep our Xmas on Thursday next, as the principal shops are closed until Wednesday, and we shall want all that day for preparation. Will you dine with us at 5 o'clock on Thursday?

Perhaps it would be better that you should not come on Wednesday. In my present condition, the excitement of your presence puts everything else out of my head, and I might forget something important for next day and vex Fred. You know I desire nothing so eagerly as to see you. I do not know how to bear your absence now.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

(Incomplete.)

"Lilliputians" is spelled with two "l's," pretty. I cannot tell you all the warm and grateful feelings I have for your kindness to Jack. My heart quite aches with love for you, because you are so good and said just what I wanted; you may depend on my always trying to please you, dearest, and never being disobedient.

I don't think you had better come without telling me first, for the house is so uncomfortable; we go out nearly every evening. We went to the Olympic and saw "Little Em'ly" and the "Princess" burlesque last night; very good, I thought. Don't have the people on Friday if it inconveniences you, dear. I am much troubled about an address to which my letters can be sent. I am strong now, and could begin to bother every manager in London, but there seems always something in the way. I could not always be at home to protect them. I am almost at my wit's end; meanwhile, time runs on.

Excuse this awful scrawl; expect me on Thursday.

With tenderest love,

Your
HELEN.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

383, Kentish Town Road,
November 29th.

Dear Arthur,

Send my letters to the above address, and you shall have the books by return of post.

That is the sole condition on which I will return them.

Faithfully yours,

The block, of course, shall be returned at once.

HELEN.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

20, North Row,
Park Lane, W.,
25th April, 1876.

My dear O'Shaughnessy,

You will doubtless be somewhat surprised at receiving a letter from me, after the long cessation of relations between us, but you will, I am sure, appreciate my motive when you know it. After all, if we are no longer friends, we are not enemies, and we have at least one bond of sympathy in the cruel calamity that has befallen the frail little creature we have both so dearly loved. My object in writing to you is to beg you, if you have any idea of attending at Bow Street on Friday, to abandon your intention. Helen is most grateful for your kindness (which does you honour), but she feels that the sight of old friends in such a fearful hour of shame and misery would only tend to deprive her of the little courage that remains to her after such terrible trials, and that at a time, too, when she will most need it; and she has, therefore, begged me to endeavour that none of those to whom she is known (except those whose presence is an absolutely necessity) may be present. Pray do not think that I wish to dictate to you in this matter. I only echo her own very natural wish. I had not seen or heard from her for a year: she wrote to me to come to her on Friday last, and I, of course, at once went, and have been since at work almost day and night in preparing for her defence. There can be no doubt, to those who know her, of her innocence; but fortune has been so cruel to her that it will be terribly uphill work to force conviction on strangers. I cannot tell what a cruel sorrow the poor little soul's misfortune is to me; but you no doubt feel it equally.

If you wish it, I shall always be glad to let you know how the matter is going on. If you see Nettleship (who, I suppose, is now on his wedding tour) or hear from him, please make of him the same request that I have made to you.

Goodbye, and for old friendship's sake surely not unkindly,

Yours,
JOHN PAYNE.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

House of Detention,
April 25th, 1876.

Dear Mr. O'Shaughnessy,

I have had your kind message just brought through my husband. Let me assure you of the great comfort it is to me, under these fearful circumstances, to find that you can spare me a few kindly thoughts.

I need not, I know, to you, disclaim all intention of the graver charge brought against me. My conscience acquits me, whatever the verdict of the court may be, and this long agony has, in some measure, made me resigned to bear the worst. The worst is over now, my poor friends know. If you are surprised at my sending for Mr. Payne, remember the great strait I was in, and that he was the only person I knew who could advise me, and, on account of his profession, be admitted to see

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

me freely, which even poor Fred is not. I am allowed but one visitor a day between 12 and 4, and that through a grating in the door of my cell except by order of the Governor, but a solicitor is admitted at any time except Sundays, and in a room with an officer waiting outside a glass door. Excuse this scrawl, my mind is greatly troubled, and I am agitated after the sad interview with dear Fred, for which I was not prepared so soon. He is very good to me. I can bear anything now. It is curious that I was just beginning a note to you that fatal Thursday when the detectives came. A French newspaper had come, addressed, I thought, in your handwriting. If you see any of my poor aunts, be kind to them. One of them seems to have annoyed Fred, but I know this dreadful affair must have driven her nearly mad, and she was like a mother to me. I mean to go away where no one but my poor husband can see me any more after this, and as I fear my unfortunate accomplice, whom I saw for the first time when he was charged with me at Scotland Yard, will be utterly ruined through me, I have resolved to touch nothing but bread and water, or sometimes coffee, until he too shall be free. I feel that nothing I can do can atone for the mischief I have done. He wrote many uncalled-for letters, and, after a time, they grew purely scientific—a treatise, in fact, on toxicology, which always somehow possessed a magnetic attraction for me, as anything relating in the slightest degree to chemistry always had. I shall miss Anton Rubinstein's Recitals, which I was beginning to look forward to when I had given up my mad resolve, which I had done a week at least before they came for me. I had hoped to see the Castellani Collection before they were sent back. Our trip to Rome fell through, through Miss Sute's dilatoriness, as I suppose you will hear in evidence.

You may write to me if you please to do so; of course, all letters are seen. I am astonished at the kindness I receive on all hands; the matron here is one of the most highly-bred and considerate ladies I have ever met, and has granted me every conceivable indulgence. I could be quite happy here in thinking of the goodness of all my kind friends, if it were not for the thought of the poor young man I have brought into this awful position—probably ruined his whole career. I am perfectly well but for a slight trouble in my head, and a general restlessness that you can easily imagine. My power of going without food, without visibly suffering, seems to cause some surprise, but they forget that people who have freely indulged in narcotics are always so. The sleeplessness at first was very painful, but I rested well last night. Now, with sincere thanks, believe me your attached and grateful friend always.

HELEN SNEE.

And so Jack was married on the 15th; he has my best wishes.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

3, Cliffords Inn, Fleet Street, E.C.,

27th April, 1876.

My dear friend,

I was very pleased to have your letter. I can only say it is worthy of you. You are right in supposing that the incessant work that has been necessary has been a great solace; indeed, it has been the one thing which has kept my heart from

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

breaking, and I can indeed appreciate the terrible addition to your grief the feeling of helplessness must be. But nevertheless, I have comfort for you; the little soul has rallied in an extraordinary manner and is wonderfully well and cheerful (I have just come from her), especially since I have procured permission to supply her with books and other little comforts, and, in particular (you will smile even in the midst of your misery), since I obtained leave for her to have a complete change of dress, etc., so that she might be properly dressed to-morrow. They brought her away, as she says, in an old dress almost in rags, and it is a natural womanly feeling to be glad to be neat and nice again.

I am much more sanguine than I was about the case, and I do hope to resist a committal to-morrow. I had a long conference with counsel (George Francis, one of the best men at the Bar) last night, and he is quite of my opinion; it is satisfactory, at least, to know that he considers I could not have done better than I have. I am obliged to leave off in haste, as I can only just catch the extra post so as to ensure your getting this to-night. I will write to you again to-morrow.

Good-bye. God bless you.

Yours always,
JOHN PAYNE.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

48, Crowndale Road,
27th April, 1876.

My dear Mr. O'Shaughnessy.

It is kind of you to try and cheer me in my misery. I have seen Helen again; she seems well in health, and was touched at hearing you had been at Clerkenwell.

I have not a jot of news to communicate, but am working as well as I can.

The sympathy that meets me at every turn is most cheering and needed. My heart is there between cold walls—a lifeless automaton is here.

Many such days will kill me.

Be assured I perfectly appreciate your suffering also.

Ever yours,
FREDK. SNEE.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

House of Detention,
April 29th, 1876.

My dear Mr. O'Shaughnessy,

At length I have a little leisure to respond to your continued kind enquiries. Yesterday passed off very well. I do not think Mr. Poland bore quite so heavily on me. There seemed a more moderate tone throughout. Of course, I was greatly relieved to hear the letters read; I could not imagine what might be in those of Mr. Vance, which I had not seen. He used to write so very fully and wrecklessly. I suppose you understand that I was the "niece"? The reason of all this extreme caution was that I had a great objection to Mr. Vance's guessing the sex of his

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

correspondent. In a missing letter he was told not to see "her" if she called, but to leave a small box to be sent for. I have quite left off crying, and my courage is now equal to anything it may be called upon to bear. I am going through a fiery ordeal, and shall surely emerge from it a very different person.

I have had a new light altogether, and see that, with ceaseless activity of hands and brains, I have lost, wasted and misapplied nearly every faculty. If I escape from this terrible pass, I mean to devote myself wholly and solely first to my dear husband, who has behaved so nobly, and then entirely to domestic duties and works of charity. I do not mean the merely lavish bestowing of money, but labour and patience with hands and head—work so thorough that even Carlyle would approve it. I have found a surer comfort than is included in the philosophy of Mr. Herbert Spencer as the author of "Roots." My dear, dear friends I trust to see for a few moments at long intervals, if only to assure them that this time is unforgotten, but I shall seek emotion and excitement no more—not even of the most purely intellectual or artistic kind. It has been given to me to see what few see in this world, the robe of conventionalisms stripped off those I love, and the divine glory of the spirit revealed in full and overpowering radiance; I fall on my knees and worship this revelation. I seem to float in an atmosphere of love and pity—I, who have no right to such things. Yet, though I cannot rightly understand this, I can at least humbly give thanks all my life for it. And no suffering or punishment I may yet be doomed to undergo before this sad strait is passed can make me less than happy. My heart is full to bursting with love and gratitude. You are all so good and dear; I shall carry the remembrance like a glorious talisman from prison to prison, if such is my fate; and do not grieve for me, for the full sweetness of life never came to me till now. Nothing can touch me further, and I am armed against all misfortunes for ever.

You have twice mentioned in your letters a name I shall always honour with the most affectionate regard. I was glad to see in the "Medical Journal," a few months ago, his address given in Wimpole Street. I trusted he was making the progress he deserved so well. I hope the fears he once entertained about his eyesight have proved groundless. I am truly glad to hear your dear wife is out of danger, and thank your mother heartily for her good wishes. I would send her my dear love, but feel myself unworthy to do so. If you would like so very much to be present in court next Friday, it will only give me pleasure to see you there, though I dreaded it yesterday, but I am stronger now. If you go, endeavour to get a seat at the table by Fred. I saw the people were dreadfully crowded behind me, and the press will only become greater as the papers seem bent on making such a sensational matter of it. As it has been made so public, it is my only chance now to have the fullest investigation made, and my own counsel may be the next to call for a remand. This must not disturb you; there is absolutely nothing more to come out, except the circumstances that induced me to adopt such a course. Of the result no one can form an opinion at present. Meanwhile, I am faring here far better than I deserve. I seem to have secured the good will of all around me, and could almost fancy myself several (thousand feet) up in the Hospice of St. Bernard—the cells are so similar. I have dear George Herbert's poems to comfort me (is that not an exquisite line:

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

"Oh, crumble not away thy soul's fair heap"), and fine needlework when I wish to sew. What a long time it seems to look back to those delightful meetings in Jack's studies; the talk used to be so invigorating. Alas! I think it is five years or more. Was it not cruel to hint that I kept the poor kitties to experiment upon? I am not Croignette, though I seem to have been a "Sphinx" for them. Why, at every hotel abroad, the first thing I ask for is a cat or kitten to take to bed. It amused them mightily at Zermatt last summer, and Fred could hardly get me away from Souste at all, because the landlady had ten Angoras.

Yours faithfully,

HELEN SNEE.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

20, North Row, Park Lane,

30th April, 1876.

My dear O'Shaughnessy,

I half expected to have seen you either last night or to-day. I have been so unwell that I have not stirred out since I came home yesterday, but be sure I will bear up by sheer force of will and not break down. I understand Mr. Snee explained to you on Saturday what had taken place. The matter is not so bad as the newspaper reports make it out, although it is most distressing not to be able to get our poor little friend out of prison. My counsel was very much troubled by the contents of the recently-produced letters, which, as he says, indicate such a persistent determination to commit suicide, and he thinks, on the face of them, it will be utterly impossible to resist a committal. The magistrate, too, appears inexorable about bail, although repeated and obstinate applications have been made. Under these circumstances, Francis (who is a man of great experience, and in whom I have great confidence) has decided not to call evidence, but to reserve the defence until the trial, which will be in about three weeks. This is the reason why the evidence appeared to you so insufficient, as we called none at all, and all that appeared (see "Times" report) was wrung out of the hostile witnesses by cross-examination. Of course, on the trial, we shall produce every tittle of evidence as to her health, etc., we can get together. I thoroughly believe that the prosecution will produce, on the next occasion, only evidence as to the nature of the drugs found at Vance's place, which cannot affect us. Francis, however, considers that the prosecution have now practically abandoned the grave charge, as Poland asked for a remand on the charge of conspiring to murder (leaving out the words "some person or persons unknown" formerly used), which, thus isolated, can apply only to the contemplated suicide. It is a great point in our favour that no drugs were found in her rooms (as elicited from Clark), and it is possible and greatly to be hoped that the drugs found at Vance's may turn out to be harmless, in which case it seems to me there can be no conviction. Helen, to whom I showed your letter of Saturday, would much like to see you, and I have therefore made an application to the Governor of the House of D. that you may be allowed to see her between 12 and 2 on Tuesday. I will write to you again as soon as I have his answer. I, of course,

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

saw her on Saturday afternoon, and found her at first much depressed, but I think I managed to cheer her up by showing her how anxious we were about her, and how unremitting would be our efforts to rescue her from her cruel position. The worst of it is that the magistrate is so hardhearted about bail, for I do not really fear any heavy punishment, even at the worst, and I have strong hopes of none at all. Rest assured that I will be strong against everything till all is done that is possible or impossible.

Always your friend,
JOHN PAYNE.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

1st May, 1876.

Dear O'Shaughnessy.

Just a word to say that I applied to the Governor this morning for permission for you to see H. to-morrow (Tuesday), between 12 and 2, but he refused to grant the permission on my application; he said, however, he would grant it if she herself asked, and I told her, therefore, to do so, when I saw her this afternoon. If, therefore, you present yourself at the H. of D. to-morrow, about 1 o'clock, I have no doubt you will be allowed to see her. She is much more cheerful to-day and delighted with your wife's kind letter. (I hope, by the bye, Mrs. O'S. is better.)

In great haste.

Always your friend,
JOHN PAYNE.

To Mrs. ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

House of Detention,
May 1st, 1876.

Dearest Madame,

Beyond the sweet surprise of your dear letter lies a greater joy.

It is to know that my old and dearly-loved friend, Arthur, has been so fortunate as to find so refined and delicate a spirit in his companion through life.

Only the purest and tenderest womanliness could have prompted what you have written to an unhappy sister, or have whispered that a few words from your weak hand would have power to melt my heart, were it harder than the "sixth stone on the High Priest's breastplate."

I thank you, dear and noble lady, for your sympathy. If I thought my grief gave me any right to touch on one of yours, I could tell you how often, after the announcement in the "Times" of the birth of your first little one, I haunted Kensington Gardens, hoping to see it—trusting to instinct to find it!

The flower, like life, was too brief, alas! and the second announcement I did not see nor hear of until long afterwards, and then I sighed for you.

I trust that all danger is over for you, and that your dear husband may soon be gratified by your complete restoration to health. Having him, what further blessing can I wish you, O happiest among women! I would send you some

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

flowers, but none grow among these stones. Yes, one. The passion flower of a perfect love, a love stronger than death. I will enclose you one of my poor husband's letters to read; Arthur can send it back in a blank envelope some time.

My thoughts are filled with a new sweet word, "Eleanor." I wish chance had brought us together years ago. I think you would have been my friend.

Yours very dearly,

HELEN SNEE.

I cannot find words to thank you. I am stupid; I have been writing all day.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

House of Detention,

May 4th, 1876.

Dear Mr. O'Shaughnessy,

Thanks for your renewed expressions of interest, and for your gentle wife's message.

If you have no very rooted objection, will you allow Mr. Payne to see, before to-morrow, my last letter to you? I think he might find a few suggestions in it for Counsel.

Yours gratefully and in haste,

HELEN SNEE.

I was not aware you had a photograph of Fred. The best was taken at Sückhardt's in Vienna. You must get him to give you a copy of that.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

Gaol of Newgate,

10th May, 1876.

Dear Mr. O'Shaughnessy,

I am ashamed to have so long delayed replying to your kind letter. I am now going to ask a very particular favour of you, and it must be kept a dead secret.

Through the kindness of the Governor here I have been allowed a special interview with my poor dear mother, to the great relief of both. Fred is not to know. You know I have been her chief support for years, and she misses me sorely. I have ventured to send her to you either this afternoon or to-morrow. Will you give her a sovereign for me, and repeat it at intervals of about a month until I am free?

I need not tell you I shall consider it a sacred debt, to be repaid the moment I am free. Should I die in prison then shew this letter to Fred, and I know he will pay the only debt I ever contracted without his knowledge or sanction.

Do not give more, because darling mother is a child where money is concerned, and it would only find its way into the pockets of Catholic priests or the first plausible beggar who might accost her.

If you would add a few cheering words, it would be as though you said them to me. Her family are very hard on her, and would be horrified beyond measure at

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

this proceeding, but I think I know you. If I presume, you should not have been so kind to me. If it is inconvenient you have but to say so, and no harm is done. I must think of some other way and shall not feel offended; do not think it.

Mr. Payne tells me you have not shewn him yet the letter written on the half-sheet of blue-lined foolscap from the H. of D.

I suppose it is lost; it doesn't matter. I thought there were a few suggestions in it that Mr. Francis might have found useful in the defence.

Did you like "Tannhäuser" very much? I am doubtful about the "Lays of France," much as I should like it—I think "Toyland" would be safer. Did you write the greater part of the Xmas number of "London Society" just before the "Portraits charmants" appeared therein? I am perfectly well; I had been worrying dreadfully about mother—now I feel relieved. Everyone here is most kind. You ask if you may send books? Certainly; reviews, history, biography or travels, not novels, but don't send a large parcel. Mr. Payne could bring them if you prefer it; he actually brought a pair of mittens yesterday!

I don't know if Fred has changed our two Mudie books yet. I told him to get Wolf's "Wild Animals" for one; I want the life of John Duncan, of Edinburgh, Professor Tyndall's "Faraday as a Discoverer," any of James Ferguson's, including his life, and "Waterton's Wanderings." I should be glad of Mrs. Browning's poems also. It is some time since I have read anything of her. What has D. G. Rossetti been doing lately, and have you been to Burlington House yet, or to Rubinstein's recitals? To-day is the second, alas! and I wanted to hear him so badly. I never see a newspaper; is it not too bad?

Ever your faithful friend,
HELEN SNEE.

TO ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

Gaol of Newgate,
12th May 1876.

Mein guter Kamarade!

You have done exactly what I wished, just when it was wanted. *Bis dat qui cito dat.* Believe me, I am most grateful. There will be no need to repeat it if they let me go after the trial. If they persist in pressing their unwelcome hospitality on me further, there will still be no need for at least a fortnight after that, nor, indeed, unless you hear from mother, will there be any more occasion for it. It is very sweet to know that there is one willing so far to take my place. But you must not do too much; you are far more likely to err that way than the other. I myself, lately, very seldom gave mother money—she cannot take care of it. I used to see her regularly once a week and buy what I saw she most wanted, to ensure its being really devoted to her use alone. Her address is 29, Denbigh Place, Pimlico, S.W., but I would much rather you did not call if it can be avoided; it would greatly embarrass poor mother, and might be the occasion of disagreeable scenes with my father, in which she would afterwards suffer. I always carefully chose those times

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

I knew him to be absent. You could always write, and if a further appeal to your goodness should be necessary, which I do not at all anticipate, perhaps a P.O.O. would be the best way of managing it. I did think of that afterwards, but had written in such a hurry the moment the idea came into my head, that, of course, I did it all wrong. In case of any further remittance, send it in my name and advise M. that you have done so; keep a strict account. I do hope I shall not long be your debtor; you shall have all, with interest, the first day I am free. How good you are! It is so touching to meet with such devoted affection. Alas! there are some debts I can never hope to repay in this world. I should dearly like to do something for you. There is no chance, fortunately, of your ever being in my position, but I should like something that would not hurt you in any way to happen, that I might shew you, in the future, how I can remember. What is the new murder? I never see a newspaper, although the good Governor did greatly astonish me by letting me have a "Punch" Fred sent, which I believe is contrary to all the written and unwritten laws, the Kabale and Mishná, not of the Talmud indeed, but of prisons.

You would like the Chaplain here exceedingly, the Rev. Lloyd Jones; he has lent me two wonderfully interesting books (his own), one by Dean Stanley, which will shew you his views are not narrow; the other, unpublished, by an Oxford man, Cornthwaite—a cousin of Mrs. Lloyd Jones. They let me out whenever the sun shines; and the doctor has given me some amazing medicine which has restored my appetite to something like what I remember having had at thirteen years of age, but not since until now.

O! how I hope and pray that all will go well! Stout heart as I keep, my very soul shrinks within me at the thought of further detention, and at the dead and awful silence that must ensue; I fear I would never bear it. Do write when you can spare a few moments. Tell me any rubbish of news; it is so dreadful to know nothing of what they are doing outside.

With best and truest regard to yourself and dear Mrs. Arthur, believe me to remain,

Ever your faithful friend,
HELEN SNEE.

To ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

Gaol of Newgate,
17th May 1876.

My dear Mr. O'Shaughnessy,

You can never over-estimate the pleasure I have in hearing from you. So many delightful associations of the happiest times in my life are called up at the bare sight of your handwriting.

I could almost suppose from the beginning of your last that you had not had one of mine, headed with a line from a favourite German song, and telling you there will be no necessity for a renewal of your kind and charitable action. It was in immediate reply to one of yours, dated May 11, telling me how nobly you had responded to my appeal. It should have reached Golborne Road on the evening

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

of the 12th inst. I wrote to your wife a day later. You must, on no account, attend to "it" regularly, nor indeed again, unless you have a line from my mother herself, which will only be in case of the failure of other arrangements, which I believe and hope will be perfectly satisfactory.

My gratitude and affection for the perfect manner in which you have fulfilled every wish of mine are yours for ever as you know. Nothing can ever break our old friendship. No one can ever fill your place in my regard. Dear Fred knows and approves of this. You have comforted him greatly. I wish he could more frequently dine with you. I dread the companionship he may fall into at the office in his loneliness. They make him play billiards, and it is so bad for him. I forget now the books I wrote of; I have at home the large illustrated edition of Jules Verne's "Les Anglais au Pôle du Nord" and "Capt. Hatteras." Perhaps the pictures might amuse your wife if she has not seen it, and for yourself there is a complete translation of Lucien in 2 vols.—French—if you have it not already. Fred would let you have any books you like, but there are only at the lodgings what we picked up in Paris last October; all the others are warehoused in the High Street Pantechnicon. Do you know Giambattista Casti's "Animali Parlanti"? That is at 48, though I have lent the 2 vols. containing "Gli giuli tre" sonnets, which are the best.

Don't speak of Paris. The doctor here has so wonderfully improved my appetite that the other day an overpowering recollection of some Bisque soup Fred and I had one day at the Café Riche came over me. I could almost see the vivid scarlet crayfish adorning its surface of tender rose colour. One is always so joyous in Paris, the air is so light and brilliant, and there is so much to see. Does not Mellarme write a pretty hand? Yes, I read all the "Portraits," even "Cleopatra," which I had missed at first, but I did not see the "Lynmouth" verses. I shall make a point of looking for them. Anything you have to say about that spot must be interesting, though, I fear, sad. Mention the book you would like; we have a double subscription at Mudie's, and as Fred does not read rapidly, you might have one volume, until I am free, and as long afterwards as you pleased.

Where do you get your notepaper? It is so pretty. I may not have my own, and the character of my writing is getting quite different from the use of quill pens. Did ever anyone commit suicide with a steel one, I wonder?

I am overjoyed at your promise to write frequently. I shall look most eagerly for your letters.

What became of a new quarterly I saw advertised before Xmas, to be called "Mind"? Some good names were connected with it, but I never could get a copy. Did it not appear? And the "Victorian Poets"? Is it worth reading? I don't want to begin George Eliot's new work until it is all out, being an impatient mortal. We have met some delightful Americans abroad; my old prejudices against them have quite died out. The women are especially intelligent and charming.

Are you pleased with young Hawthorne? I think it is most interesting to contrast his work with his father's; he inherits so much, and it is so singularly different and yet with such curious resemblance.

A PATHETIC LOVE EPISODE.

Do you remember Donatello's little hairy ears in "Transformation" ?

Everything you tell me is interesting at all times, though I would rather have you speak than write, naturally, and I am deeply sensible of the kind feeling that prompts you to devote time to me that so many more interesting correspondents claim. I could tell you so much, but may not exceed the narrow limits of this paper.

There was an article on Knebworth, I think in the "Gentleman's," in which I think I should have traced your hand, even if I had not known your intimacy with the late Lord Lytton. I am not certain of the magazine, however.

Your dear mother is still living with you ? Present her my best regards. I have never forgotten her kindness to me years ago.

The most affectionate remembrance to your wife, whom I truly love and admire.

Believe me to be always

Most faithfully yours,

HELEN SNEE.



